

**Amendments to the Claims:**

Claim 1 (Withdrawn): An isolated nucleic acid sequence for promoting expression of heterologous molecules in the plastids of higher plants selected from the group of Prnn sequences having SEQ ID NOS: 4-30.

Claim 2 (Withdrawn): The nucleic acid sequence of claim 1 operably linked to a sequence encoding a heterologous molecule of interest or precursor thereof.

Claim 3 (Withdrawn): A vector comprising the nucleic acid sequence of claim 2.

Claim 4 (Withdrawn): A transgenic plant comprising the vector of claim 3.

Claim 5 (Withdrawn): The sequence of claim 1, wherein expression of said heterologous molecule is increased relative to that observed using wild type Prnn sequence.

Claim 6 (Withdrawn): The sequence of claim 1, wherein expression of said heterologous molecule is decreased relative to that observed using wild-type Prnn sequence.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): An isolated nucleic acid molecule ~~sequence~~ for promoting expression of heterologous molecules in the plastids of higher plants, wherein said nucleic acid molecule comprises ~~comprising mutations which minimize homologous recombination at the Prnn operon having the~~ sequence of SEQ ID NO: 51.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): A nucleic acid molecule comprising the ~~The nucleic acid sequence molecule~~ of claim 7 operably linked to a nucleic acid molecule ~~sequence~~ encoding a heterologous molecule of interest or precursor thereof.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A vector comprising the nucleic acid ~~sequence~~ molecule of claim 8.

Claim 10 (Original): A transgenic plant comprising the vector of claim 9.

Claim 11 (Withdrawn): A chimeric promoter for expression of transgenes in plastids of higher plants, comprising at least one PTME operably linked to a promoter element selected from the group provided in Table I, said chimeric promoter being further operably linked to a sequence encoding a heterologous molecule of interest.

Claim 12 (Withdrawn): The chimeric promoter of claim 11 wherein said PTME is SEQ ID NO: 50 and the promoter is rbcl.

Claim 13 (Withdrawn): The chimeric promoter of claim 11 wherein said PTME is SEQ ID NO: 50 and the promoter is psbD.

Claim 14 (Withdrawn): A vector comprising the sequence of claim 11.

Claim 15 (Withdrawn): A plant comprising the vector of claim 11.

Claim 16 (Withdrawn): A vector comprising the chimeric promoter of claim 12.

Claim 17 (Withdrawn): A vector comprising the chimeric promoter of claim 13.